



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1291 Vienna, 26 November 2020

#### **EU Statement on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Monsieur le Président, cette année marque à la fois la 25<sup>ème</sup> commémoration du Génocide de Srebrenica et les 25 ans des Accords de Paix de Dayton/Paris ; nous attendons des élites politiques des actes politiques forts et concrets démontrant leur engagement profond à promouvoir la réconciliation dans le pays. Le révisionnisme, notamment la minimisation ou le négationnisme du génocide de Srebrenica, et la glorification des criminels de guerre condamnés par la justice contredisent les valeurs de l'Union européenne et sont incompatibles avec la perspective d'intégration dans l'Union européenne.

Mr Chairperson, in December 2019, the Council of the European Union reiterated its unequivocal commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU perspective as a single, united and sovereign country. The EU urged executive and legislative bodies at all levels of government to start addressing the 14 key priorities identified in the Commission Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for membership of the European Union, in line with the interests of all citizens to advance towards the European Union.

In the past months, Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities have taken some steps to address the Opinion's key priorities. The EU welcomes that for the first time since 2008, local elections will take place in the city of Mostar on 20 December 2020. As

mentioned in the Commission 2020 Communication on EU enlargement policy, political leaders also reached an agreement on 17 June 2020 on further electoral reform. We call for an inclusive process of electoral reform, through genuine dialogue and in line with European standards, that would eliminate all forms of inequality and discrimination in the electoral process. Regarding the local elections which were held on November 15 in the whole country and which are to be held on December 20 in Mostar, we wish to recall the importance of refraining from any provocative statements aimed at creating a climate of division. We underline that no legislative or political step should be taken which would make the implementation of the Sejdic Finci ruling and related ECHR rulings more challenging.

We welcome the recent adoption of the revised national war crime strategy, and call for its swift implementation, which will contribute to the wider goal of promoting an environment conducive to reconciliation.

We call on the authorities of the country to build on this momentum and continue to engage on reforms, thereby giving tangible proof that Bosnia and Herzegovina is willing to take the necessary steps to become a member of the EU.

The European Union underlines the need for the authorities to work towards strengthening the rule of law, in particular the independence and integrity of the judiciary, fighting corruption and organised crime, countering radicalisation as well as guaranteeing the independence of the media, safety of journalists and media actors, promoting youth employment and education, gender equality and renewing their efforts towards socioeconomic reforms. Bosnia and Herzegovina can count on the commitment of the European Union to support its reforms and its economic and social development. But the onus is on the political leaders of the country who still need to demonstrate political will to undertake major reforms.

Nous attendons également des autorités qu'elles assument pleinement les responsabilités qui leur incombent pour ce qui est de la situation migratoire, et notamment, avec notre soutien, qu'elles réunissent d'urgence les conditions permettant de faire face aux besoins humanitaires, y compris l'hébergement des réfugiés et migrants, tout en travaillant au renforcement de ses capacités de

gestion de frontières.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, like the rest of Europe, continues to be impacted by the global COVID 19 pandemic. In these difficult times, the EU remains firmly engaged in assisting Bosnia and Herzegovina in addressing the immediate health needs as well as with the long-term social and economic impact resulting from the pandemic. The recent Commission's Economic and Investment Plan, once again demonstrates the EU's strong commitment towards Bosnia and Herzegovina and all the Western Balkans' partners.

Lastly, with regard to the political and security situation on the ground and the importance of maintaining a safe and secure environment, the European Union reiterates its firm support to EUFOR Althea and to the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

\* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.